CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of recording, with a channel change function, and playing back, sessions from multiple digitally encoded, interframe compressed streams of audiovideo data, comprising the steps of:

    (a) formatting each digitally encoded, interframe compressed stream of audiovideo data for recording;

    (b) recording each formatted stream on a recording medium as one or more sessions while permitting changes between different formatted streams, wherein the end of each session defines a channel change between different formatted streams;

    (c) recording on the recording medium one or more splice point indicators providing information sufficient to determine the end of each session;

    (d) reading each session from the recording medium;

    (e) applying each session to a synchronizable decoding device;

    (f) detecting one or more splice point indicators;

    (g) determining the end of a session based on the information provided by the detected splice point indicators; and

    (h) re-synchronizing the decoding device to a reference clock value corresponding to a next session in response to detection of each session end.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein each splice point indicator delineates the end of a session.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the splice point indicators are continuity time-stamp fields periodically recorded on the recording medium.

4.   The method of claim 3, wherein the reference clock value is derived from at least one continuity time-stamp field.

5.   The method of claim 3, wherein the period of the continuity time-stamp fields permits re-synchronization with essentially no perceptible interruption in decoding of the streams.

6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the period of the continuity time-stamp fields is at least equal to the track rate of a helical scan recording device.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the reference clock value is embedded in such next session.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the digitally encoded, interframe compressed streams of audiovideo data are MPEG-encoded.

9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of re-synchronizing comprises the steps of:

(a)   issuing a check condition indicating detection of the end of a session;

(b)   receiving a request sense command; and

(c)   determining a reference clock value in response to receipt of the request sense command.

10. A system for recording, with a channel change function, and playing back, sessions from multiple digitally encoded, interframe compressed streams of audiovideo data, comprising:

(a) a formatting system for formatting each digitally encoded, interframe compressed stream of audiovideo data for recording;

(b) a recording device for recording each formatted stream on a recording medium as one or more sessions while permitting changes between different formatted streams, wherein the end of each session defines a channel change between different formatted streams, and for recording on the recording medium one or more splice point indicators providing information sufficient to determine the end of each session;

(c) a media reading device for reading each session from the recording medium and applying each session to a synchronizable decoding device;

(d) a detector for detecting one or more splice point indicators and determining the end of a session based on the information provided by the detected splice point indicators; and

(e) a control system for re-synchronizing the decoding device to a reference clock value corresponding to a next session in response to detection of each session end.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein each splice point indicator delineates the end of a session.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein the splice point indicators are continuity time-stamp fields periodically recorded on the recording medium.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the reference clock value is derived from at least one continuity time-stamp field.

1   14.   The system of claim 12, wherein the period of the continuity time-stamp fields

2   permits re-synchronization with essentially no perceptible interruption in decoding

3   of the streams.

1   15.   The system of claim 14, wherein the period of the continuity time-stamp fields is

2   at least equal to the track rate of a helical scan recording device.

1   16.   The system of claim 10, wherein the reference clock value is embedded in such

2   next session.

1   17.   The system of claim 10, wherein the digitally encoded, interframe compressed

2   streams of audiovideo data are MPEG-encoded.